

Be Looking Ahead to Judgment Day

Grace, mercy and peace are yours, from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Are you ready? Is everything in its place? Are you missing anything? Is there anything you've forgotten to do before you pass away? Do you have your affairs in order? Do you have a will in place? Funeral preparations planned out? Are you prepared for the end of life?

Are we ready? We ask this question almost every day, but how often do we ever ask this about our faith? Are we ready? Are we spiritually prepared for when Jesus returns? If Jesus appeared right now, how would we feel? Would we be worried we hadn't done enough? Are we ready for Judgment Day? This morning we will see that when we prepare with our own actions, all we are left with is uncertainty. However, through faith in Christ, we have confidence as Judgement Day approaches.

I. Our Own Actions Only Bring Uncertainty

Verse 27 from our text is incredibly clear. Judgment Day is coming. It's unavoidable. In fact, you could say it's our destiny. **27 People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.** God is incredibly clear in his Word. This world is coming to an end. In 1 Corinthians 7:13 St. Paul tells us, "**Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away.**" We already heard a little bit about that last week. Jesus listed off all sorts of signs that the world was coming to an end. We see all of those signs around us. The end of the world hasn't come yet, but Jesus' words make it clear. The end is coming soon. We must be prepared for Judgment Day.

Are you ready for Judgment Day? What have you done to prepare for the end of the world? Maybe you feel as if you need to do something, anything at all, just to win God's favor. Maybe you feel as if you haven't done enough, that God might not be satisfied with what you've done so far, and you need to do even more. Maybe you feel that you have done so much bad, that you need to do a whole lot of good to balance the scales. Maybe you haven't given Judgment Day a single thought. "It's not that big of a deal. I'll be fine when it comes."

However, our Scripture lesson for today is evidence for us that no one can ever be truly ready on their own. Just look at the Old Testament priests. **25 Nor did [Christ] enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world.** The Old Testament sacrifices were never enough. Day after day, for hundreds of years the Israelites offered sacrifices. God demanded blood to pay for their sins. There was an almost constant stream of sacrifices being offered up to God. Yet all of those sacrifices, all of that blood wasn't enough. How could our own righteous actions ever be enough?

There is no need to think long on this question. God's answer to this question is made clear in Scripture. Romans 3:10 **There is no one righteous, not even one.** Galatians 3:10 **For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."** Romans 3:23. **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** No one can earn a favorable judgment from God. God sees our sinful ways, and there is only one verdict that is handed out to unrepentant sinners.

The sentence for this failure to be 100% perfect is death. One little teeny tiny mistake, and it's the guilty verdict. This verdict isn't lightened if we've been "really good" for most of our lives. The sentence is eternal, and it's the worst penalty of all. Complete separation from God and his grace, forever in the fiery pit of hell. Are you ready for Judgment Day? On my own, the answer is no. I'm never ready. I have failed.

II. Christ Brings Complete Confidence

However, as much as our own sacrifices are not enough, Christ's sacrifice is sufficient. Hear again the words of our text. **Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (25-28)**

As our text points out, Jesus **appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages**. Jesus was the "high point," the climax of all of history. Everything in the Old Testament, including the sacrifices that the priests offered, all pointed forward to him. Every single prophecy about the Messiah was fulfilled in him. His perfect life and innocent death in our place was the highest, most important point in history!

Christ's sacrifice was exactly what was needed to pay the price for our sins. He did not need to offer himself over and over again. It was one sacrifice, for the sins of the entire world. He has **done away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. (26)** In the face of the doubt that our sinful actions bring us, through faith in Jesus Christ we can have confidence as Judgment Day approaches. Confidence in his death on the cross, because through that sacrifice he has taken away our sins. We have eternal life through him. He allowed all of that pain and suffering to happen, all of that because he loved us. In fact, he was the only one who could have done what he did. Our Great High Priest, Jesus, was, and still is, without sin. He lived a perfect life, to fulfill God's demand that we be perfect, just as he is perfect. He kept every law perfectly. He fulfilled every prophecy that spoke about the coming Savior. Christ did it all. We have nothing to worry about. We have confidence in our perfect Savior.

On top of this, we are given another reason that we can have confidence. Jesus **entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. (24)** Jesus now stands before God, face-to-face, interceding on our behalf. He is our mediator, the one who goes back and forth between God and man. He now speaks with the Father in heaven on our behalf. And what does he say? "God, you promised that all who believe in me will be saved. Well look at Fred and George...etc. They all believe in me. I have saved and forgiven all of them!" How amazing is that? We have confidence in our perfect mediator, because we know that he is always there, speaking for us day after day!

We know our Savior is in heaven, and that will return to us, but we do not know when he will come. That is our mindset as we await our Savior? We wait with eager confidence, and hopeful expectation of the things to come. The world around us sees the end of times as something terrifying. It's a complete unknown. There's no hope for those without Christ. "This or that government official will keep me safe. My house and possessions, these are what I have confidence in?" But what happens when all of that is lost? A favorite politician loses their election. A house and everything in it is wiped out by fire. What is there to have confidence in when none of it lasts forever?

But as Christians, we have nothing to be afraid of. Our hope is in Christ. When he comes, we have complete confidence in him. **He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (28)** Jesus will come not to die again for sin, but to take all believers with him into heaven! This brings us to what you and I are to do as we eagerly await our Savior. This section from Hebrews reminds us that Jesus brings salvation only to those who believe in him. What a great reminder and motivator this is for us to go out and spread the good news about Jesus!

So, are you ready for the end of the world? Putting your house in order and having a plan lined up for when you pass a way is an excellent thing. That's just being a good steward of the gifts God has given you. But when it comes to Judgment Day, Christ has put your spiritual house in order. By his life, he fulfilled every single law and prophecy from Scripture in our place. He did perfectly everything that we cannot. By his death and suffering, he paid the price needed to wash away the sins of the whole world. Jesus has done it all. He brings us complete confidence in the salvation that he will bring us. May you always have this confidence to eagerly await the coming of our Savior Jesus! Amen.